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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000384

SIPDIS

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SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KEDEM](#) [PREF](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: CENSUS IN DARFUR IN TROUBLE

REFS: A. KHARTOUM 372

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 172  
[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 155  
[1](#)D. KHARTOUM 114

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The Central Bureau of Statistics office in North Darfur cited many obstacles to carrying out the census. Aside from security, transportation, communication, and logistical concerns, the CBS hasn't received confirmation from the local community, especially the native administration and the very skeptical IDP population, that they will participate. The CBS continues to lack a solid plan for the enumeration of displaced populations and seems uncannily nervous about conducting a census in Darfur next month.  
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On 11 March, poloff met with the Director of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) for North Darfur, her staff, and a UNFPA representative. After making introductions, the Director immediately discussed the constraints the CBS faces in carrying out the census in the region and gave a brief update of the status of the census in North Darfur.

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CBS FINALLY ADMITS TO CENSUS PROBLEMS IN DARFUR  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) The Director listed several issues CBS North Darfur is facing prior to next month's census. First, she said, the CBS needs help from the UN and NGOs in order to gain access to IDP camps and other areas to conduct enumeration (note: this is a strange request because it is her own government, through NISS and HAC, that control access to many IDP camps). Second, the enumerators in the field lack communication devices (such as satellite phones) which are necessary for communicating with the CBS North Darfur office from remote areas during the two-week enumeration period. Third, the enumerators lack transportation to enumerate within their localities. The director said that they need 100 UN vehicles to enter the IDP camps and 30 vehicles for enumerators across the region. She also mentioned that the enumerators will need helicopter support to some localities. Fourth, CBS Khartoum has not yet solidified a plan for distributing materials (i.e. census questionnaires, writing materials, etc.) to the states. The UNFPA rep said that questionnaires need to be distributed to the localities at least 3 days in advance of the census. The CBS has requested UN transportation support for the materials, but has not yet submitted a formal proposal to the UN. Fifth, the CBS does not have a plan for providing enumerators with security support.

[1](#)4. (SBU) When poloff asked the CBS team whether the census would go forward as planned in mid-April even though there are major constraints to conducting the census in Darfur, the Director said that the CBS is only a "technical institution" and does what it is "instructed to do" by the GoS in Khartoum. Refusing to give a

personal opinion, the Director said that questions about the security concerns of conducting the census in Darfur should be answered by the GoS. Although the CBS Head office in Khartoum has a security committee to deal with potential security problems related to the census around the country, the El Fasher office does not have its own security plan or committee.

15. (SBU) The local CBS director stated that the CBS has met with sheikhs and umdas in IDP camps in order to inform them about the census. She said that she is "90 percent sure" that they (and the communities that they lead, especially inside the camps) will accept the census. As for a plan of enumeration in the camps, she said that CBS is going to suggest that sheikhs and umdas choose people in the camps to conduct a joint enumeration with CBS enumerators. [Note: In a separate meeting poloff had with well-respected umdas from Abu Shouk Camp on 13 March (septel) they expressed strong concern about the census in Darfur and said that neither they, nor their communities, will participate. End note.]

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STATUS ON DARFUR - MAPPING, ADVOCACY, AND MORE  
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16. (U) Touting familiar numbers, the Director claimed that 80 percent of Dafur's land has been mapped. She said there are some areas the GoS cannot not map due to security constraints, and there are other areas that are completely empty because people have fled.

17. (U) On March 9, the Deputy Wali of North Darfur formally kicked off census activities in the state. Soon after, the CBS began its advocacy campaign in North Darfur. The local CBS media and information committee has approached local radio and TV stations in order to launch the census media campaign in North Darfur. Radio messages about the census currently being broadcasted only reach 30 percent of the state. The local CBS office has asked a radio station out of Khartoum to broadcast the census message to achieve 100

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percent coverage across North Darfur. The census messages are being broadcasted in Arabic as well as local dialects. On 17 February, the CBS began training enumerators in Khartoum. On 9 March, local CBS offices began training enumerators in the North Darfur localities.

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STATUS OF CENSUS IN WEST DARFUR  
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18. (SBU) On 11 March, poloffs spoke with UNAMID Civil Affairs in El Geneina, West Darfur. UNAMID recently conducted a census "opinion survey," covering a range of groups including IDPs, political parties, tribal leaders, Arabs, Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signatory representatives, and civil society organizations. Survey results indicated that every group opposed conducting a census in Darfur. The acting West Darfur UNAMID Head of Office remarked that even the head of the State Legislative Council, the Sultan of the Massaleit, is opposed to the census, noting that because of the concentration of IDPs, other displaced civilians and population transfers (particularly the phenomenon of Chadian Arabs settling in/migrating into Sudan, especially around Wadi Salih), a census would be distorted, resulting in potential economic and political imbalances.

19. (SBU) According to UNAMID Civil Affairs, neither the West Darfur CBS office, nor the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in West Darfur have undertaken census advocacy in the region. The CBS cannot safely access IDP camps in West Darfur (as is the case in North Darfur) and asked Civil Affairs to work as their proxy in the camps, though the UN has so far declined. The West Darfur UNAMID Head of Office noted the fundamental realities on the ground in West Darfur: no planning has been done, sufficient resources are not present and, most importantly, the population at large rejects the proposition of a census. She anticipated that should the census proceed, it would likely lead to incidents of violence. She also said she is prepared to tell her staff to avoid IDP camps and other potential hot-spots during any census-taking activities.

110. COMMENT: The North Darfur CBS, which recently moved into its "new" office space, is in a dilapidated building on the outskirts of

town and only has four computers - all of which were switched off and covered in plastic. The fact that there was no activity in the office just one month prior to the census is cause for deep concern and a sure sign that "census crisis" is about to hit Darfur. The Director's immediate launch into constraints of carrying out the census in the North Darfur region leads us to believe that the situation for the census on the ground in Darfur is not nearly as under control as the CBS head office in Khartoum recently proclaimed (ref B). Furthermore, UNAMID Civil Affairs was not reluctant to explain the dire situation that the CBS West Darfur office faces in getting camp access and being properly equipped for next month's exercise. The long list of CBS constraints, as well as the population's negative feelings about the census - not to mention the fact that the CBS might not even get access to large parts of the Darfuri population - will likely cause the census either to be postponed in Darfur, or to result in inaccurate numbers that could cause a strong reaction among the population. Regardless of what numbers are produced, they will be rejected by the Darfuri population, especially without adequate external/professional monitors. Strangely enough, this is a paradoxical situation where regime hardliners in Khartoum and suspicious local populations, especially IDPs, both don't want the census in Darfur to occur, albeit for different reasons.

FERNANDEZ